

DMH Connections

A publication of the Mass. Department of Mental Health
Employee Newsletter
Office of Communications & Consumer Affairs

July 2009



In This Issue

[Check Out the Department of Public Health Blog](#)

[Annual DMH Forensic Conference a Big Success](#)

[Multicultural Corner](#)

[Conferences and Events](#)

[Expanded Mental Health Parity Law Now in Effect](#)

[Stay Tuned: New Look for the DMH Intranet on the Way](#)

[Make Your Nomination for the 26th Annual Performance Recognition Program](#)

[July is National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month](#)

[A Day in the Life](#)

[North East Area NAMI Walk Team](#)

[Employers Recognized for Outstanding Contributions to Mental Health](#)

[Village Hill Northampton Reaches Another Milestone](#)

[Articles of Interest](#)

Expanded Mental Health Parity Law Now in Effect

Massachusetts citizens will face fewer barriers to treatment under the expanded mental health insurance parity law that went into effect on July 1.

The new parity law, supported by the Administration and enacted by the Legislature this year, aligns Massachusetts with other states that have found significant advantages with minimal cost impact in covering the full range of mental disorders as opposed to a restricted list. Under the state's old law enacted in 2000, full parity was given to an under-inclusive list of "biologically based" disorders which included schizophrenia; schizoaffective disorder; major depressive disorder; bipolar disorder; paranoia and other psychotic disorders. The new and expanded law now includes eating disorders, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other depressive disorders which can be significantly disabling and have both biological and non-biological components.

"Without mental health insurance parity, society perpetuates the myth that mental illness is a character flaw, something influenced by attitudes and myths rather than science," said Commissioner Barbara Leadholm. "It is an illness, it is treatable and treatment works. While parity does not guarantee access to treatment, it eliminates discrimination in insurance coverage and dispels stigma. Coverage increases the acceptability of the illness and addresses stigma head on."

Commssioner's message

Expanded mental health insurance parity can address a particularly critical need experienced by many returning combat veterans. In Massachusetts, an average of 500 U.S. soldiers return home from active duty and combat in Iraq and other countries. A study conducted by the U.S. Army showed that 1 in 8 returning soldiers suffers from PTSD. The study also showed that less than half of



[Click here](#) to view the
Commissioner's message

Office of Communications and Community Engagement

Anna Chinappi, Director

Sarah Spaeth, Communications
Coordinator

Please contribute to the next edition of DMH Connections

Deadlines for upcoming
issues:

July 24 for the August 3
newsletter

August 21 for the September 7
newsletter

Please send all materials to
Sarah Spaeth at
[sarah.r.spaeth@massmail.state
.ma.us](mailto:sarah.r.spaeth@massmail.state.ma.us)

Department of Public Health Blog



[Click here](#) to view the DPH blog
which features expert tips on
nutrition and physical activity as
well as a roundup of health and
wellness events.

combat veterans with mental health problems are seeking care, mainly because of the fear, shame and stigma. In this light, the new law removes a significant barrier to treatment for returning soldiers, their families and loved ones.

Stay Tuned: New Look for the DMH Intranet on the Way

Over the past few months members of AIT and the Office of Communications and Community Engagement have been busy redesigning the DMH Intranet site. The EOHHS IT division has worked to standardize agencies' public web presence and internal intranet sites. The newly designed DMH intranet site is set to go live in the next couple weeks.



Our new intranet design will have several new features, including a video lending library. The video lending library is a collection of videos DMH has acquired over the years and are now available to be checked out by DMH employees. The video lending library can be found under the Publications tab on the intranet. The videos are categorized and a brief description is provided. DMH employees can request a video online by filling out an electronic form.

Another new feature is the Staff Development tab. The Staff Development tab features a calendar of activities and trainings as well as free online resources to assist in staff development. The calendar allows you to search for classes by area so you can find courses that are near your work or home.

Thank you to the DMH intranet redesign team who worked tirelessly on this effort. The team consisted of: Paul Burns, AIT Project Manager; James Owens, EOHHS Project Manager; Sean Keegan, EOHHS Developer; Vijay Bezawada, EOHHS Developer; Debbie Harrison, AIT Office Manager; Joan Kerzner from the DMH Office of Communications; and Sarah Spaeth, DMH Communications Coordinator. Also thank you to Anna Chinappi, Director of Communications and Consumer Engagement; and Claritza Abreu, Assistant Commissioner of AIT; for providing guidance and feedback. And a special thank you to Jean Comparetti, Co-Director of Training; and George Greiner, Director of Staff Development; who went above and beyond to help with the redesigning of the Staff Development tab.

We'd also like to acknowledge and thank the site test group: Susan Hanely, Dianne Young, Ashley Pearson, Walter Polesky, Julia Meehan, Brenda Peterson, Bobbi

Annual DMH Forensic Conference a Big Success

More than 200 people from across the state representing the forensic community, court clinics and inpatient services gathered for the annual DMH Forensics Conference last month in Leominster. The conference provided an opportunity to link forensic services to new developments in the community mental health system and helped participants understand Massachusetts forensic mental health services in the context of national trends.

Speaking about new developments were Emily Sherwood and Dr. John Simons, Ph.D., from the Executive Office of Health and Human Services; and DMH Assistant Commissioner for Mental Health Services Marcia Fowler, J.D. A panel discussion included presentations about trends in adult and juvenile forensics, presented by Ira Packer, Ph.D.; DMH Assistant Commissioner for Forensic Services Debra Pinals, M.D.; Thomas Grisso, Ph.D.; Jeffrey T. Richards, J.D.; and Thomas Riffin, Psy.D.

A highlight of the conference was the presentation of the 2009 Forensic Awards in Recognition of Service to the Commonwealth. Amanda Shaw, LCSW; Bethany Balford, LICSW; Jim Kenney, M.Ed.; Roger Goldin, Ed.D.; and Robert Fleming, Ph.D. were recognized for their outstanding effort in their fields.

Amanda Shaw has worked for the Dedham and Woburn District Courts for less than five years. Although she has not worked there very long, her supervisor, Cathy Neidich, MSW, LICSW, said that Amanda is the strongest social worker she has worked with in her 28 years of employment. Amanda was

Spofford, David Lamore, Paula Gidopoulos, Jeffrey Burke, Mike Nagy, Eileen Weber, Jay Level, John Gilmore, Debra Pinals, Sean Barry, Jane Evans, Pamela Mason, Catherine Andrews, David Lamore, Robert Jacome and Amy Wing.

We hope you find the intranet site easy to navigate and useful in your work.

Make Your Nomination for the 26th Annual Performance Recognition Program

DMH is once again planning its 26th annual Performance Recognition Program (PRP), a program which allows the Commonwealth to thank its outstanding employees who demonstrate exemplary leadership, strong commitment and an extraordinary work ethic.

Employees and their contributions play a major role in the Commonwealth's successful delivery of quality services to its citizens. Outstanding employees set high standards for themselves and they motivate and influence their fellow workers to adopt similar standards. For 26 years, the PRP has publicly acknowledged and encouraged outstanding performance. DMH staff are encouraged to actively promote and support this program within their divisions and work unit. You can acknowledge colleagues by nominating individuals or teams who have shown exemplary leadership skills, innovation and creativity in their work, established new and exciting programs and in the delivery of exceptional quality services.

DMH has a truly exceptional and dedicated workforce. Anyone can submit a nomination for an individual or team who shows strong leadership, demonstrates exceptional performance and shows the dedication and drive to make the lives of consumers and co-workers a better place to live and work.

Nominate an individual or team by [clicking here](#). Please submit forms to Abigail Monska, PRP coordinator, by July 10, 2009. The nomination criteria is on the Form 3 and you may either send or fax in the completed nominations to Abigail at DMH Central Office, 25 Staniford Street, Boston, MA 02114 or fax her at 617-626-8014. You may also reach her by phone at 617-626-8019 or by email if you have questions about the program.

Staff can also nominate a colleague for the Eugene H. Rooney Public Service Award for exemplary leadership and innovations in human resources management and training or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Mentoring Award. [Click here](#) for the form.

recognized for her graceful transition into her job role. While at work, she researches systems to obtain appropriate disposition options for persons before the court, conducts diagnostic assessments and recommends service and treatment options to supplement her assessments. Amanda also manages to find time to coach an inner-city lacrosse team. In recognition of early career contributions to Forensic Mental Health Services, Amanda received the Early Career Achievement Award.

Bethany Balford, LICSW, has been working with Team Coordinating Agency, Inc. (TCA) since 1979. She has served as a social worker for the past 21 years and has held the title of Court Clinic Program Director for 16 years, overseeing forensic services to three Superior Courts and eight District Courts. She also supervises the eight DFPs and the social workers who staff these courts. Bethany was recognized as a highly dedicated and meticulous worker. She is an asset to forensic social work and has been an asset to the Department for 30 years.

Bethany was recognized for her work with a Certificate of Appreciation at the award ceremony.

Jim Kenney, M.Ed., helped envision and implement services to the Women's Addiction and Treatment Center, which opened in 2006. Despite challenges, his creative ideas and dedication helped ensure that services be delivered to women in need. During the startup period, Jim went around to the six DMH Areas and constantly held meetings and gathered information to bring back and use in further service planning. He consistently stays on-call for patients and employees. For his dedication and vision, Jim was recognized this year by DMH Forensic Mental Health Services with a Certificate of

July is National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

July is National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month and on Tuesday, July 14,

National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month
JULY 2009



the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)-Dorchester/Mattapan/Roxbury chapter will host an expert panel who will discuss mental health issues among minority populations, the interaction between mental illness and physical illness and the role of churches in mental health treatment in African American communities.

Six experienced child and adult mental health professionals will join the panel along with Sarah Vinson, M.D., clinical fellow, Harvard Medical School, adult psychiatry resident, serving as moderator. The event will be held at the Boston Public Library Mattapan Branch at 1350 Blue Hill Avenue in Mattapan from 5 to 8 p.m. The event is free and open to all.

Last year, Congress proclaimed July as Minority Mental Health Awareness Month in honor of Bebe Moore Campbell, a noted African American author who wrote about mental illness and died a few years ago. The resolution sponsored by Rep. Albert Wynn [D-MD] and cosponsored by a large bipartisan group aimed to enhance public awareness of mental illness and mental illness among minorities.

Ms. Campbell's interest in mental illness was the catalyst for her first children's book, "Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry," which was published in September 2003. This book won the NAMI Outstanding Literature Award for 2003. It tells the story of how a little girl copes growing up with a mother who is living with mental illness. Perhaps her most important work of fiction was "72 Hour Hold," a gripping novel of family and redemption and a mother's struggle to save her eighteen-year-old daughter from the devastating consequences of bipolar disorder.

Bebe Moore Campbell's life was tragically cut short by brain cancer in November 2006. She is an ongoing inspiration to thousands of families living everyday with mental illness, especially in minority communities.

The event is co-sponsored by the Cambridge Health Alliance with support from a U.S. Center for Mental Health Services grant for diversity.

A Day in the Life

Every month, DMH Connections talks to one of the many DMH employees who make a difference every day in the lives of people we serve. This month, it's a day in the life of Elizabeth Smith (pictured right), Human

Appreciation.

J. Roger Goldin, Ed.D., has worked for more than 30 years at the Berkshire Court Clinic. This year, his work was recognized with the prestigious seventh annual Robert Fein, Ph.D. Distinguished Service Award, representing years of service and contribution to the field of public sector forensic mental health. He has been an asset to the Court and is highly respected in the Massachusetts Forensic System. Dr. Goldin has mentored numerous staff and has meticulously helped them gain DFP status. He goes above and beyond expectations and has a true concern for the system. He has worked with the DFP and CJCC committees and also with the Area Forensic Director in Western Mass. to address issues as they emerge and provide seamless services.

Robert Fleming, Ph.D., has been working as the Clinical Director of Juvenile Court Clinic Programs in the Barnstable, Plymouth and Bristol Counties. Due to his outstanding work with children and families of the Commonwealth, Dr. Fleming was awarded by the Juvenile Trial Court the Seventh Annual Richard W. Barnum, M.D., Distinguished Service Award.

After the awards were distributed and there was an opportunity for informal catching up among colleagues, the afternoon consisted of a session by Thomas Grisso, Ph.D., about the Essentials of Forensic Report Writing. After that, the group split up into break-out groups for Juvenile and Adult forensic clinicians for separate seminars on performance improvement. All considered this year's Conference a tremendous success.

Service Coordinator for child/adolescent services at Solomon Mental Health Center in Lowell.

What are your main job responsibilities?

Child/adolescent case management has a multitude of job responsibilities that can be fit into three main categories, but the categories don't paint a true portrait of what the job completely entails. In short, a case manager provides advocacy, coordinates and monitors service delivery, and within a supportive relationship with culturally diverse families and clients provides ongoing outreach while monitoring and assessing level of risk. Along with these responsibilities, there is also the ever present need for documentation, record keeping, risk assessment and MHIS notes to be completed in a timely manner.

On a daily basis I advocate and help families link to and navigate systems of care, to include school systems, benefit and entitlements, outpatient treatment, hospitalizations, juvenile court and other services as needed. I visit clients and their families a minimum of once a month, more if the situation warrants it.

One of the most important things parents say is helpful is being available at the other end of the phone to listen when they are struggling with the demands of their severely emotionally disturbed children.

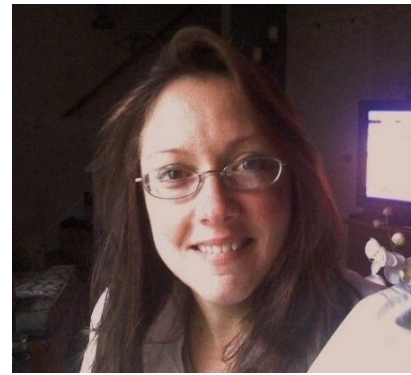
What is a typical day like?

There is no typical day in case management, days vary from one day to the next based on crisis, hospitalizations and possibly court involvement. Flexibility is an important part of the job. It requires juggling paperwork, phone calls, home visits, provider meetings, educational plan meetings, court appearances and hospital meetings. There are times when an entire day might be taken up with travel if a meeting for a client takes place out of the area.

What are your greatest challenges?

A frequent challenge is negotiating with various systems of care to provide the most comprehensive network of services that promotes growth and stability within the community. This involves coordination with both traditional and non-traditional community resources such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, Job Corps, career centers, recreational planning, after school programs and other support services. In these systems the challenge is knowing how to provide safe, productive and, when necessary, modified activities. With the hope this will reduce risk, increase socialization and increase connection to their community.

What are your greatest rewards?





Last month the White House declared June to be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Pride Month. This prompted the Office of Multicultural Affairs to look into mental health issues for LGBT consumers and, fortunately, we didn't have to look far. With significant help from the DMH Office of Consumer Affairs, we offer the following resources:

An expert interview with Alicia Lucksted, Ph.D., who has worked extensively with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people living with mental illness. When asked about particular challenges and obstacles faced by this population, Dr. Lucksted noted:

"...It puts an enormous strain on an individual when a person:

- ❖ *Cannot be oneself;*
- ❖ *Has to carefully manage his/her identity; and*
- ❖ *Decide continually what can and cannot be revealed about oneself."*

Another question posed to Dr. Lucksted was whether a person needed to be LGBT to work effectively with LGBT consumers:

"...A GLBT identity is not necessary but a certain level of knowledge and awareness, including self-knowledge and self-awareness, is necessary... The clinician sounds pretty with-it in terms of GLBT issues at first, but as soon as the client starts talking about things in detail, it becomes clear that the care provider's knowledge and comfort level are actually quite

Working with a challenging population with varying degrees of difficulty and knowing that my efforts make an impact on their recovery. There is a satisfaction in collaborating with families to effect positive change and improve the functioning and quality of life for a child and family as a whole.

Who do you interact with the most?

Interaction varies from day to day with clients, providers, advocates, courts and others based on the issues being dealt with at the time. However, I often have daily contact with my co-workers and especially find contact with my direct supervisor Jim Farren and site director John Gilmore supportive and helpful.

Do you work with other EOHHS agencies?

It's a regular part of the job. We often work with the Department of Children and Families, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Department of Developmental Services and Department of Transitional Assistance depending on the needs of the client involved.

How did you come to be in this profession?

My educational background is in child development/psychology and behavior management from California State University, Chico, and Lesley College. I began working at Team Coordinating Agency, Inc. programs beginning in 1994 and worked my way up from direct care staff at the Pathways Program (DCF based program) to assistant program director at Crossroads (DMH contracted program) and on to social worker at the Milestone Program (DMH/DCF 30-day assessment program). I was hired as child/adolescent case manager at the Greater Lowell Site in September of 2001. In 2005 I began working as a transition age Case Manager until 2009 when I transitioned back to the child/adolescent system.

What advice would you give someone considering your profession?

As this profession can put many demands on an individual, it is important to take care of yourself in order to perform optimally any job in this field. Foster personal supports and connections as they will be important in grounding you and helping to keep work from taking over your personal life. Leaving the job at work can sometimes be one of the most important skills to learn, it helps keep burn-out from catching up with you.

Treating everyone with respect and dignity is the cornerstone to a supportive relationship with any client. However, clear boundaries are also an imperative when working with clients. It allows you to provide objective, effective treatment and keeps the lines of professionalism from blurring.

North East Area NAMI Walk Team

limited."

For the full interview with Dr. Lucksted, please [click here](#).

Rainbow Heights Club - Located in New York City, Rainbow Heights is an advocacy organization providing support and direct care services to LGBT mental health consumers. The organization's website, www.rainbowheights.org, is full of resources for consumers, providers and advocates.

Among the many resources on the Rainbow Heights site, are "Guidelines for effective and culturally competent treatment with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people living with mental illness." The guidelines suggest that providers be aware of the following in their work with LGBT consumers:

Use of inclusive language - Intake forms, for example, ask individuals for their marital status - single, married, widowed, or divorced - which excludes many same sex couples. An example of more inclusive language would be "Are you in a relationship right now?"

Awareness of subtle heterosexist messages - Micro-communications occur on a daily basis and on multiple occasions. Anyone who has had estranged relationships with family or friends or who has lost someone important in their lives, as many LGBT individuals have, may be hypersensitive to possible clues of acceptance or rejection. Non-inclusive language, as demonstrated above, can be construed as lack of support for LGBT individuals. Any effort, no matter how small, can help ameliorate this situation. One example would be to hang a small flyer or notice about an LGBT event or resources in the waiting room to communicate the message that it is a friendly environment.



The North East Area Team raised \$625 and recruited 29 walkers for the 2009 Nami Walk. Congratulations on a job well done!

Employers Recognized for Outstanding Contributions to Mental Health

Commissioner Barbara Leadholm gathered at the State House with more than 300 legislators, consumers, family members and



advocates to celebrate the many ways that people mental illnesses enrich our communities and to recognize the Massachusetts businesses that employ them. Those whose employment accomplishments were celebrated received rehabilitative and recovery support from 32 Clubhouses across the state that help people who have mental illness move on with their lives by returning to work, finishing school or finding an apartment, with support, in the community.

Representatives from more than 40 businesses traveled to the State House to accept awards for providing opportunities for people with mental illness, enabling them to succeed. The companies recognized included Maloney Properties in Newton; Trader Joe's in Shrewsbury; Market Basket in North Andover, Reading and Fitchburg; the Westfield Public Schools; Marshalls in Haverhill; and The Sun Chronicle in Attleboro. Each company employs people who have a mental illness.

Commissioner Leadholm congratulated the employers, saying, "You have shown us that tearing down those

Normalization of disclosure - An affirmation such as "I'm glad you told me that," followed by the same kind of questions that would be posed to any consumer upon mention of a relationship ("What's he like? Where did you meet her?") demonstrates an acceptance of sexual orientation and can generate the kind of positive relationship that will be the foundation of the therapeutic experience going forward.

Using the people significant to the consumer as key supports in their treatment -

Consideration of the person's partner, as well as other loved ones, friends, and family as part of the treatment team who have crucial information to provide and key support to offer can lead to improved treatment outcomes. For many LGBT consumers, "family of choice" may be more relevant than traditional concepts of family.

Avoid over-pathologizing (and under-pathologizing) -

Expression of sexuality is generally healthy and to be lauded; on the other hand, not every expression is positive. A balanced view must be maintained in evaluating sexual activity and its impact on physical and emotional health, self-esteem and relationships.

Conferences and Events

June 22 - August 28 [**26th Annual Cape Cod Summer Symposia**](#)

July 11 [**Understanding and Living with Depression**](#) Richard B. Simches
Research Center Auditorium
Massachusetts General Hospital
185 Cambridge Street, Charles
River Plaza, Boston, MA

July 14 **NAMI Mental Health Awareness Presentation** at
Boston Public Library, Mattapan



today. Your business sense is very keen. By finding outstanding employees through the Clubhouses and by considering their abilities rather than disabilities, you are creating the road to recovery for many consumers, pathways for talented, skillful and enthusiastic employees to be contributing, integral members of their communities."

Leonard Campbell, an employee of DoggieDay Pet Services and a member of Transitions of Boston Clubhouse in Dorchester, talked about his recovery. "With support from the people at Transitions of Boston and DoggieDay, I have been working full time since October 2008 and I'm no longer on SSI. This has been an amazing journey for me. I'm now more confident, independent, and I have a sense of purpose. Thank you everyone, and remember - Clubhouse works!"

Massachusetts Clubhouse inclusion and rehabilitation centers are funded primarily by DMH. Each center provides services, supports and information to adults with mental illness who want to return to work. Participants, or members, help to run the centers alongside paid staff and receive assistance in gaining an education, employment and housing while enjoying support from fellow members and staff.

Village Hill Northampton Reaches Another Milestone

The Community Builders and MassDevelopment hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony last month for Hillside Place at Village Hill in Northampton. This is the second phase of housing development at the former Northampton State Hospital, consisting of 40 newly constructed apartments, ranging from one to three bedrooms.



barriers is possible. It is also the right thing to do. We recognize the compassion and community-mindedness of the business leaders here

Branch
1350 Blue Hill Avenue,
Mattapan, MA 02126 from 5-8
p.m.

August 3 **State Mental Health
Planning Council** 10 a.m. - 1
p.m. At DMH's Boston Room;
RSVP by emailing
SMHP.Council@dmh.state.ma.us
or by calling the State MH
Planning Council Confirmation
line at 617-626-8177

August 5 **The National Library
of Addictions Cordially
invites you
to this year's
Common Ground event
to express support and hope
in the war against
addiction** with Special Guest
Speaker
Former NFL Player Isaiah
Kacyvenski
of The Seattle Seahawks,
Brewer Fountain at Boston
Common from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.,
RSVP to Chrissy Kinch by
Monday, August 3rd, 2009 at
(617) 488-2876 or
ckinch@regancomm.com



Think before you print

We will be posting **DMH
Connections** on DMH's
intranet site

Local dignitaries, including current and former mayors Claire Higgins, David D. Musante and Mary L. Ford, participated in the ceremonies. Streets in the development have been named after the former mayors as well as for Rev. Leroy Moser and the late Edwin L. Olander.

"This is how we create hope," said Elizabeth Sullivan, DMH's Western Mass. Area Director, at the ribbon cutting, "This serves to reinforce the values of recovery, resiliency and, most importantly, hope that individuals with mental illness matter, have a voice and are never forgotten."

Hillside Place at Village Hill marks another important step in the continued development of Village Hill Northampton. The site has been designed as a sustainable community, including elements to reduce utility costs to ensure the neighborhood's continued growth. Among the environmentally friendly features are eight roof-mounted photovoltaic panels that provide enough electricity to run exterior lights at night and light common areas such as hallways during the day. Each unit has super insulated walls up to eight inches thick, airtight construction, quality windows and Energy Star-rated heating equipment and appliances.

Articles of Interest

[Report on Gene for Depression Is Now Faulted](#) by
Benedict Carey, New York Times

[Mental Illness: Far More Chinese Have Mental Disorders
Than Previously Reported, Study Finds](#) by
Donald G. McNeil Jr., New York Times

[Silencing the Voice That Says You're a Fraud \(RE: inner
criticism\)](#) by Melinda Beck, The Wall Street Journal

[Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology forum
focuses on vets' mental health](#) by Carol Lawless, West
Roxbury Transcript

[Dr. Tim Health Alert: Depression Medications](#) WCVB-TV

[Study Clarifies a Depression Risk](#) by Roni Rabin, New
York Times

[Study: Early Therapy Can Save Teens from Depression](#)
by Steve Prezant, Time Magazine

[Staying Sane May Be Easier Than You Think](#) by John
Cloud, Time Magazine

[Suicide Warnings for 2 Anti-Smoking Drugs](#) by Gardiner
Harris and Duff Wilson, New York Times

[Mental Health Cuts Put Strain On Melrose Emergency
Room](#) by Fred Thys, WBUR

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